United Nations A/67/519

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 October 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
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Letter dated 10 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 September 2012 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-seventh of the General Assembly under agenda items 9, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 36, 37, 41, 45, 57, 61, 63, 68, 70, 75, 113, 116, 118, 119, 129, 131, 132, 134, 135 and 145.

(*Signed*) Mourad **Benmehidi**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria
to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

Annex to the letter dated 10 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration adopted at the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77

New York, 28 September 2012

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China met at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 September 2012 on the occasion of their thirty-sixth annual meeting. The Ministers reviewed the world economic situation and the development challenges faced by developing countries and adopted the following Declaration:

1. The Ministers, after reviewing the world economic situation, note that the global financial and economic crisis, although its origins were in the developed world, continues to adversely affect developing countries, not only in economic terms, through, inter alia, the competitive devaluation of currencies and the presence of barriers to trade and finance in some of the anti-crisis measures taken by some developed countries, but also in social development, leading to a major loss of jobs and difficulties for Governments in financing social programmes that address poverty or the provision of basic amenities, which threaten the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

2. The Ministers express deep concern about the adverse impacts, particularly on development, of the ongoing world financial and economic crisis. In this context, the Ministers stress the necessity to urgently address the problems, emphasizing that such a crisis should not be used under any circumstances as an excuse to slow down or not fulfil the obligations and commitments of the developed partners towards the developing countries, including commitments related to international development assistance.

3. The Ministers reaffirm the urgent need for an effective response to the current economic crisis, which is not over and the recovery from which is uneven and uncertain. The systemic problems facing the global economy have to be resolved, including through the full accomplishment of the reform of the global financial system and architecture.

4. The Ministers reaffirm that economic and social development is the centrepiece of the objectives of the United Nations. The achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, should continue to be the overarching framework of the development activities of the United Nations system. The Ministers reiterate the need to fully implement all agreed commitments from all the major United Nations summits and conferences in the economic, social and related fields and further emphasize the need for a strengthened global partnership for development, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies.

5. The Ministers express their commitment to strengthening efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and to start shaping the international development agenda post-2015.

6. The Ministers express their deep concern for the constraints on the fight against poverty arising from the current global crises, in particular the world financial and economic crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the energy crisis and the challenges posed by climate change to developing countries. They reiterate that special attention must be brought to the structural roots of poverty in the international system hindering the efforts of the developing countries in their fight against poverty. In this context, the Ministers reaffirm that sustained and inclusive economic growth is essential for eradicating poverty and hunger, in particular in developing countries, and stress that national efforts in this regard should be complemented by an enabling international environment aimed at expanding the development opportunities of developing countries.

7. The Ministers reiterate that poverty eradication cannot be successfully achieved without the collective commitment and efforts of the international community. Therefore, international cooperation based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies must be enhanced, including fulfilment of the commitment of internationally agreed official development assistance (ODA), debt relief, market access, capacity-building and technical support.

8. The Ministers reiterate that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing developing countries today and addressing it as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. They recall the proclamation in 2007 of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) and the need for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth at all levels in order to successfully engage in addressing poverty and reach the Millennium Development Goals.

9. The Ministers state that the United Nations is the only global body with universal membership and unquestioned legitimacy and is therefore well positioned to address global economic governance with the objective of reaching sustainable and socially balanced economic development. The role of the United Nations in global economic governance should thus be strengthened. For the United Nations to fulfil its role in global economic governance, the political will of all Member States to commit to the United Nations processes, to multilateralism and its underlying values is critical. Member States must commit to working in solidarity on coordinated and comprehensive global responses to global economic governance issues and to taking actions aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations development system in responding to global crises and increasing its impact on development. For this the United Nations must also be equipped with the resources and capabilities necessary to effectively and quickly address global challenges.

10. The Ministers take note of the recent developments in the Bretton Woods institutions, and call for an expeditious completion, as soon as possible, of a much more ambitious process of reform of the governance structure of those institutions and of an accelerated road map for further reforms on the voice, participation and enhanced voting power of developing countries based on an approach that truly reflects its development mandate and with the involvement of all shareholders in an equitable, transparent, consultative and inclusive process. In this regard, the Ministers call upon the United Nations General Assembly to launch a process to reform the international financial and monetary system.

11. The Ministers recognize that inequality within and among countries is a concern for all countries, regardless of their level of development, and that it represents a growing challenge with multiple implications for the realization of economic and social potential and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. They stress the need to address the persistent and significant disparities between developed and developing countries and inequalities between the rich and the poor and between rural and urban populations. In this context, the Ministers reaffirm the importance of greater consideration of the impact of social and economic inequalities in development, including in the design and implementation of development strategies.

12. The Ministers stress the importance of establishing an appropriate follow-up mechanism within the United Nations system to bridge the gap between policymaking and the implementation of commitments, particularly through the establishment of a Financing for Development commission as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. It is also important for Member States to support efforts to strengthen and further advance the Financing for Development process, which would help to enhance the coherence and consistency of the financial and trading systems to ensure that they support the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

13. The Ministers underline that debt crises tend to be costly and disruptive and followed by cuts in public spending, affecting in particular the poor and vulnerable. They recognize the importance of debt relief, including debt cancellation and debt restructuring. In this regard, they reiterate the urgent need for the international community to examine options for an effective, equitable, durable, independent and development-oriented debt restructuring and international debt resolution mechanism and call upon all countries to promote and contribute to the discussions within the United Nations and other appropriate forums with that objective.

14. The Ministers reaffirm that ODA remains essential as a catalyst for development, facilitating the achievement of national development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. The global financial and economic crisis cannot be used by developed countries as an excuse to avoid fulfilling existing aid commitments and making further commitments. An effective response to the ongoing economic crisis requires the timely implementation of existing aid commitments and an urgent and unavoidable need for donors to fulfil them.

15. The Ministers stress that developed countries must meet and scale up their existing bilateral and multilateral ODA commitments and targets made, inter alia, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in the Gleneagles communiqué, in the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and in other relevant forums. An enhanced predictable and sustainable flow of ODA is essential to meet the regular development challenges as well as the new and emerging challenges in developing countries, in particular in least developed countries and other vulnerable developing countries.

16. The Ministers reiterate that, as a group, developed countries are still far from achieving the long-standing goal of mobilizing 0.7 per cent of gross national product in ODA to developing countries, including the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of ODA to the least developed countries. In order for agreed commitments and targets to be met, the Ministers call upon the developed countries to establish clear

and transparent timetables within their national budget allocation processes to reach the level of 0.7 per cent for ODA to developing countries, including the target of 0.15-0.20 per cent of ODA to the least developed countries by 2015 at the latest. Notwithstanding the positive impact of debt relief on development, it should not be counted as part of the ODA contribution. The Ministers reaffirmed that the full implementation of these commitments will substantially boost the resources available to push forward the international development agenda and to assist developing countries in mitigating and more effectively responding to the crisis in accordance with their national strategies.

17. The Ministers recognize that innovative mechanisms of financing can make a positive contribution in assisting developing countries to mobilize additional resources for development on a stable, predictable and voluntary basis. They reiterate that such financing should be disbursed in accordance with the priorities of developing countries, should not unduly burden them and should neither replace nor negatively affect the level of traditional sources of development financing, including ODA. While highlighting the considerable progress in innovative sources of financing for development, they also consider it important to scale up present initiatives and develop new mechanisms, as appropriate. As work is expanded and new initiatives are taken, they stress that priorities should remain focused on providing traditional development financing with additional, stable and supplementary resources.

18. The Ministers express their deep concern at the increasing inequality between developed and developing countries, since most developing countries have been deprived of financial investment despite the different reforms and policies they have undertaken to create a more attractive investment climate. The reform policies are often constrained by conditionalities imposed by the international financial institutions. There is a need for conscious policy measures to facilitate foreign direct investment to developing countries, including investment guarantee schemes, favourable trade access, production and supply agreements, local processing and marketing of raw materials and commodities, underlining the importance that foreign direct investment align with national development priorities.

19. The Ministers emphasize the urgent need to increase efforts at the national, regional and international levels to address food security and agriculture development as an integral part of the international development agenda. They underline the need for sustained funding and increased targeted investment to enhance world food production and call for new and additional financial resources from all sources to achieve sustainable agriculture development and food security.

20. The Ministers reaffirm that hunger constitutes a violation of human dignity and call for urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination. They also reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, so as to be able to fully develop and maintain his or her physical and mental capacities.

21. The Ministers emphasize that achieving food security will require strengthening and revitalizing the agriculture sector in developing countries, including through the empowerment of indigenous peoples, rural communities, small- and medium-scale farmers, the provision of technical and financial assistance, access to and transfer of technology, capacity-building and exchange of

knowledge and experience. The Ministers underscore that subsidies and other market distortions by developed countries have severely harmed the agricultural sector in developing countries, thereby limiting the ability of this key sector to contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication and sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable development, food security and rural development. The Ministers, therefore, call for the immediate elimination of all forms of agricultural subsidies and other market-distorting measures by developed countries. They urge the developed countries to demonstrate the flexibility and political will necessary to meaningfully address these key concerns of developing countries at the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

22. The Ministers welcome the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 66/221 of 22 December 2011, which declares 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa, as an initiative from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and invite countries to support its implementation. In that regard, the Ministers express their commitment to promoting the cultivation of quinoa, because of its nutritional properties, in the fight against hunger. They also emphasize the importance of disseminating information on the qualities of this nutrient by supporting research and development programmes.

23. The Ministers welcome the decision of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to appoint Juan Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, as Special Ambassador to FAO for the International Year of Quinoa, in recognition of his leadership and commitment in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. The Ministers also support the organization of the International Committee for the Coordination of the International Year of Quinoa, which will promote programmes and activities to ensure the success of the Year.

24. The Ministers state that international trade is a vital tool to provide long-term sustainable growth. Owing to the global financial and economic crisis, the decline in trade has had a severe impact on developing countries through the fall in exports and loss of export revenues, restricted access to trade financing and reduced investment in production diversification and in the promotion of exports. In order to fully harness the potential of trade, it is important to uphold a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that contributes to growth, sustainable development and employment, particularly for developing countries.

25. In this context, the Ministers urge developed countries to desist from all protectionist measures, especially those affecting developing countries, including tariff, non-tariff and other barriers to trade, in particular agricultural subsidies, and to rectify any such measures already taken. They call for the fulfilment of all commitments contained in the 2001 Doha Declaration for special and differential treatment for developing countries, bearing in mind the special needs of the least developed countries.

26. The Ministers strongly emphasize the necessity of a timely conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which fully respects its development mandate and takes into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. The successful outcome of the Doha Round will help to ensure growth in global trade, prevent protectionist measures, in particular in developed countries, and create new market access opportunities for developing countries.

27. The Ministers call upon developed countries to implement effective trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building to developing countries, particularly the least developed among them. They also call upon the developed countries to provide adequate support for the Enhanced Integrated Framework in order to address the supply side and trade-related infrastructure and productive capacity constraints to assist the developing countries to increase their exports and added value and to enhance sustained growth and employment so as to lift more people out of poverty.

28. The Ministers note the outcome of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Doha from 21 to 26 April 2012, which reaffirmed the core mandate of UNCTAD defined in the Accra Accord, and confirmed the role of the organization as the focal point for an integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, while enhancing synergies and complementarities with other United Nations and international organizations. They express the hope that the international community will fully support UNCTAD in its activities and encourage the organization to add its contribution in reaching more development goals during the next four years.

29. The Ministers emphasize the need for the timely implementation of the duty-free and quota-free market access, on a lasting basis for all least developed countries as expressed in the Istanbul Programme of Action. They stress the importance of facilitating the accession of all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries that apply for membership in the World Trade Organization, without political impediments, in an expeditious and transparent manner and with full observance of the principles of special and differential treatment for developing countries.

30. The Ministers recognize that South-South trade should be further strengthened. They note that enhanced market access between developing countries can play a positive role in stimulating South-South trade and, in this regard, inter alia, welcome the conclusion of the third round of the Global System of Trade Preferences by the adoption on 15 December 2010 of the Sao Paulo Protocol and encourage all developing countries that have not yet done so to consider acceding to the Global System of Trade Preferences and its protocols.

31. The Ministers stress the need to resist all protectionist measures and tendencies, especially those affecting developing countries, including tariff, non-tariff and other barriers to trade, in particular agricultural subsidies. To rectify any such measures already taken, they recognize the right of countries to fully utilize their policy space and flexibilities consistent with World Trade Organization commitments and call upon the World Trade Organization and other relevant bodies, including UNCTAD, to continue monitoring protectionist measures and assess their impact on developing countries.

32. The Ministers call for the full implementation of the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food-importing Developing Countries by providing such countries with technical and financial assistance in order to meet their food needs.

33. The Ministers express their deep concern on the continuing shortfall of technology transfer, know-how and expertise towards developing countries. They emphasize the need to adopt appropriate measures to overcome the technological gap between developing and developed countries and to work towards arrangements that facilitate the process of technology transfer. Technology transfer to support economic and social development and the transfer of environmentally sound and clean technologies are key to advancing the development efforts of the South. Developing countries should be enabled to develop their own technology with the support of the international community, including building local capacity to design and develop technologies. The Ministers stress that advances in science and technology and easier access to the latest technologies will certainly help developing countries to achieve significant progress in areas such as agriculture, health, energy, trade, water and environmental protection. Advancement in these sectors in essence represents the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Ministers call for early action with regard to a facilitation mechanism for the promotion, development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, as agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

34. The Ministers urge the international community to address the challenges caused by international migration on the basis of common responsibility of all nations, genuine partnership and common understanding, in order to assure that international migration can contribute to the development of both origin and destination countries while minimizing the negative impacts.

35. The Ministers call on all Member States to renew the political will to address the challenges and opportunities of international migration, both regular and irregular, in a balanced manner and to promote respect for and protection of human rights in the development and implementation of policies regarding migration. In this regard, they stress the importance of ODA and other sources of international resource mobilization to support the efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty and promote the right of peoples to development, as a key instrument to control migration flows, which are motivated, inter alia, by the search for better welfare and job opportunities.

36. The Ministers firmly reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasize that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. They therefore call on the international community not to recognize these measures nor apply them.

37. The Ministers reaffirm their strong support to the United Nations and to all collective efforts aiming at enhancing its ability to fully implement its mandates and to ensure the effective delivery of all its programmes and activities, in particular in the social and economic development field. The Ministers firmly believe that the legitimacy and viability of any reform measures depend ultimately on the approval of States Members of the United Nations. The Ministers emphasize that measures to reform of the United Nations should respond to its the unique intergovernmental, multilateral, international and inclusive character.

38. The Ministers call for strengthening of the United Nations role in international economic and financial affairs, including its coordinating role in global economic governance. Likewise they stress that it is important to promote greater cooperation between the United Nations and the international financial institutions. In that regard, they reiterate the central role played by the United Nations as a focal point for the Financing for Development follow-up process and the need to maintain that role to ensure the continuity and dynamism of the process, while reaffirming the need to further intensify the engagement of all stakeholders, including the United Nations system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, in the follow-up and implementation of the commitments made at Monterrey and Doha.

39. The Ministers reaffirm that the quantity, quality and predictability of development assistance from the United Nations system constitute a central priority for developing countries. In addition, the growing imbalance between core and non-core resources for operational activities must be addressed as a matter of urgency. They note that the increasing shift from core to non-core funding tends to lead to fragmentation and can impair the effectiveness and efficiency of operational activities, as non-core resources are unpredictable and increase transaction costs, inefficiency, incoherence and fragmentation of the United Nations system, including at the country level, causing competition among organizations, as well as inviting them to divert from their respective mandates. Therefore, the Ministers call upon donor countries to provide adequate financial resources in order to restore the balance between core and non-core funding resources and to ensure an expanding and adequate base of resources for development.

40. The Ministers reaffirm that strengthening the role and capacity of the United Nations development system to assist countries in achieving their development goals requires continued improvement in its effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact, along with a significant increase in resources. In that regard, the fundamental characteristics of the United Nations operational activities for development must remain, among others, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner. Moreover, operational activities should be carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own national policies and national priorities for development. In this regard, the Ministers look forward to a successful conclusion of the negotiation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which recognizes the needs and priorities of developing countries.

41. The Ministers stress the importance that the entire United Nations system, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors, recognize the ownership of the developing countries concerned, align their cooperation programmes with the national development strategies of those countries and harmonize, as appropriate, their individual cooperation programmes with a view to making the optimum contribution to the realization of national development strategies.

42. The Ministers recall the special needs of Africa, the only continent currently not on track to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. They recognize that, while economic growth is returning, there is a need to sustain the recovery, which is fragile and uneven, to

face the ongoing adverse impacts of multiple crises on development and the serious challenges these impacts pose to the fight against poverty and hunger, which could further undermine the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in Africa.

43. The Ministers express their profound concern that the commitment to doubling aid to Africa by 2010, as articulated at the Gleneagles summit meeting, was not entirely reached and, in this regard, stress the need to make rapid progress in order to fulfil the Gleneagles and other donors' commitments to increase aid to African countries through a variety of means, including the provision of new additional resources, technology transfer, as well as capacity-building, and to support their sustainable development. In contrast, the Ministers welcome the support that some developing countries have extended to Africa through South-South and triangular cooperation programmes.

44. The Ministers express their concern for the situation in the least developed countries, which continues to deteriorate as a consequence of the ongoing multiple and mutually exacerbating global crises. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis is clearly undermining development in the least developed countries. They recall that the modest development gains that the least developed countries made over the years are being reversed, pushing a larger number of their people into extreme poverty. Many least developed countries continue to be lagging behind in meeting most of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Development Goals.

45. The Ministers reaffirm that the full implementation of the commitments adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was held in Istanbul from 9 to 13 May 2011, will substantially boost the resources available to push forward the international development agenda and to assist developing countries to mitigate and more effectively respond to the crisis in accordance with their national strategies.

46. The Ministers recall that the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States have been acknowledged by the international community since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in Barbados in 1994, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg in 2002, and the International Meeting on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in Mauritius in 2005, and note with concern that insufficient steps have been taken at the international level to address the vulnerabilities and effectively support their sustainable development efforts, including in achieving the internationally agreed development goals.

47. The Ministers recall that climate change and rising sea levels pose the greatest threat to the survival and viability of small island developing States and their efforts to achieve sustainable development goals and, in this regard, call upon the international community to commit itself to urgently increasing international cooperation to support those efforts, particularly through increased financial resources, capacity-building, transfer of technology and know-how, and increased participation of small island developing States in international economic decision-making.

48. In this context, the Ministers call for enhanced efforts to assist small island developing States in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. They also called for the United Nations system to support small island developing States in keeping with the ongoing emerging challenges faced by such States in achieving sustainable development, and for the convening of the third international conference on small island developing States in 2014.

49. The Ministers reiterate their recognition of the special needs of and challenges faced by the landlocked developing countries, caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea and aggravated by remoteness from world markets, and their concern that the economic growth and social well-being of landlocked developing countries remains very vulnerable to external shocks, as well as the multiple challenges the international community faces, including the financial and economic crisis, and climate change and stress the need for the international community to enhance development assistance to landlocked developing countries to help them overcome their vulnerabilities, build resilience and set them on a path of sustainable social and economic development. They therefore reaffirm the need to urgently address the special development needs of and challenges faced by the landlocked and transit developing countries through the full, timely and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, as contained in the Declaration on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

50. The Ministers welcome the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 66/214 of 22 December 2011, to hold a comprehensive 10-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014, which should be preceded by regional and global as well as thematic preparations in a most effective, well-structured and broad participatory manner. Two meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee should be convened in early 2014. In this regard, the Ministers take note of the outcome of the Fourth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries and the High-level Global Thematic Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade, held in Almaty from 12 to 14 September 2012.

51. The Ministers recognize that middle-income countries still face significant development challenges and underline that, despite the recent progress achieved and the efforts made by middle-income countries, 75 per cent of the world's poor population lives in those countries. The achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the creation of jobs for young people, the diversification of their economies and the development of technologies, continue to be huge challenges for middle-income countries.

52. Furthermore, the Ministers would like to underline the increasing solidarity and role played by middle-income countries in the area of South-South cooperation in support of the developing efforts of other developing countries.

53. The Ministers welcome the organization and celebration, on 17 May 2012, of a high-level event to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The event was held during the eleventh session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/142.

54. The Ministers welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/296 of 17 September 2012, on the organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held on 22 and 23 September 2014 in New York, in order to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including pursuit of the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In the resolution, the Assembly decided that the World Conference should result in a concise, action-oriented outcome document and encouraged the participation of indigenous peoples in the Conference.

55. The Ministers welcome the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", and express their appreciation to the Government of Brazil for successfully hosting the Conference, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. The Conference reaffirmed that poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge today. It also renewed essential commitments, reaffirmed fundamental principles, in particular the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and provided new directions for sustainable development. The Ministers urge the international community to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

56. The Ministers call upon the General Assembly to successfully and expeditiously launch the follow-up processes agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, by ensuring a balanced representation of developing countries, effective and full implementation of the outcomes of the Conference, including effective institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all levels, as well as the provision of adequate means of implementation to developing countries.

57. The Ministers affirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

58. The Ministers recall once again that climate change is one of the most serious global challenges of our times. They underline the fact that developing countries continue to suffer the most from the adverse impacts of climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. They also recall the challenges faced by developing countries from the impact of response measures. Climate change threatens not only development prospects and the achievement of sustainable development but also the very existence and survival of countries and societies.

59. The Ministers stress that the international community, in particular the developed countries, given their historical responsibility, need to take the lead in addressing this challenge within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its principles and provisions, in particular the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and provide financial and technological support to developing countries. The Ministers emphasize that a legally binding second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol is critical and must be the key deliverable of the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the

Parties to the Kyoto Protocol at Doha, and must be ambitious in terms of the emission reductions and shall begin on 1 January 2013, in order to avoid any gap between the first and the second commitment periods. Ministers stress the need to urgently close the ambition gap, and express their concern at the lack of fulfilment of commitments by developed countries. They emphasize that developed countries must make robust and ambitious mitigation commitments, with ambitious quantitative emission limitation reduction targets, as required by science and mandated by the Convention.

60. In this context, the Ministers look forward to a successful and comprehensive outcome at the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and stress the importance of the full implementation of the delicate package endorsed at the seventeenth meeting and seventh session in Durban in all its aspects, including the achievement of a quality legal second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol. They also stress the importance of the successful conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, in line with the Bali Action Plan and the substantive progress made in the Cancun and Durban decisions, by incorporating comparable ambitious targets for Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol parties, and addressing in a balanced and effective manner the issues of adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology and capacity-building.

61. The Ministers call upon all parties to preserve the architectures of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol developed over almost two decades and caution against any attempt to renegotiate or interpret the Convention or its principles, and warn against the unravelling of the international climate change architecture into a weaker regime based on "pledge and review" for Annex I parties.

62. The Ministers consider that progress in the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action is critical for taking the Convention forward. However, work must ensure a strong linkage between mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation, in a balanced manner, as is reflected in the Convention. The Ministers hold the view that all tracks under the Convention must progress in an expedited, ambitious and effective manner. Such progress should reflect the linkages between mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. This relationship is embedded in the Convention.

63. The Ministers call on all Annex I parties to fulfil their commitments relating to mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity-building under the Framework Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

64. The Ministers stress that the treatment of climate change in the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization needs to be coherent with the principles and provisions of the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

65. The Ministers reaffirm that desertification, land degradation, drought and dust storms and sandstorms represent a serious concern for developing countries; international action is, therefore, urgently required to address these challenges. They emphasize the great importance of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, stressing that desertification, land degradation and drought corrode the three pillars of sustainable development. The Ministers reiterate that addressing desertification, land degradation and drought enables

countries to deal with several global policy challenges, such as food security, adaptation to climate change and forced migration. In this context, the Ministers note the outcome of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Changwon, Republic of Korea, from 10 to 21 October 2011.

66. The Ministers firmly call on all parties to fully support the implementation of the Convention in all its aspects, in particular by promoting the exchange of knowledge on best practices and lessons learned from global and regional cooperation in combating desertification, land degradation and drought.

67. The Ministers stress that emphasis should also be given to the mobilization and channelling of adequate and predictable financial resources and to facilitating direct access to resources, in order to help address the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable people affected by these most urgent matters at the national, subregional and regional levels.

68. The Ministers recognize the interrelationship between climate change, the loss of biodiversity and desertification, and the need to intensify efforts to combat desertification and promote sustainable land management, and stress the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination among the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, while respecting their individual mandates.

69. The Ministers express their concern at the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding, the increasing frequency and severity of dust storms and sandstorms and their negative impact on the environment and the economy, and call for the adoption of appropriate policies in developing countries and the provision of financial resources and technology transfer from developed countries to address them.

70. The Ministers express their commitment to strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development, and urge Member States to take urgent action to reverse desertification, land degradation and drought, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders. They further urge the United Nations system, relevant regional and international organizations, multilateral agencies, major groups and other stakeholders to contribute towards the achievement of a land-degradation neutral world. In accordance with the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, they resolve to take coordinated action nationally, regionally and internationally, in accordance with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to monitor, globally, land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas and call for implementation, taking into account national priorities, circumstances and development strategies.

71. The Ministers also express their support to enhance the scientific basis of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including the consideration of a regionally balanced intergovernmental scientific panel on desertification, land degradation and drought.

72. The Ministers reaffirm the intrinsic value of biological diversity, as well as the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its critical role in sustainable

development and human well-being. They reiterate the severity of global biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems and emphasize that these undermine global development, affecting food security and nutrition, the provision of and access to water, and the health of the rural poor and of people worldwide, including present and future generations mainly in developing countries.

73. The Ministers call for the implementation, as appropriate, of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020 as the overarching biodiversity framework, and for ongoing efforts aimed at translating the Aichi Biodiversity Targets into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. The Ministers welcome the adoption and opening for signature of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization and called for its early entry into force. They also call upon the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance capacity of developing-country parties to the Convention in ensuring preparedness for implementing the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol. As the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020, provides a unique opportunity to engage the people of the world in the battle to protect life on Earth, the Ministers reaffirm their commitment to spare no efforts for the successful implementation of the objectives of the Decade.

74. The Ministers reaffirm their support for a successful outcome of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Hyderabad, India, in October 2012 and, in this regard, note the importance of the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development, to be considered by the eleventh meeting, as a useful tool which could supplement North-South and triangular cooperation in making important contributions to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

75. The Ministers welcome the strategy for resource mobilization in support of the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and stress the importance of providing biodiversity financing.

76. The Ministers reaffirm the social, economic and environmental benefits of forests, the significant contribution of sustainable forest management to sustainable development and poverty eradication and the need for enhanced efforts to achieve the sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration of forests and afforestation and the need to promote the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and its four global objectives on forests; and the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the occasion of the launch of the International Year of Forests. The Ministers stress the importance of addressing financial gaps in sustainable forest management by the establishment of a new global forest fund in the framework of the United Nations, in line with the principles of sustainable development, in order to address the financing needs of countries to sustainably manage their forests, in particular developing countries with special needs and circumstances, including African countries, least developed countries, low forest cover countries, high and medium forest cover countries, high forest cover low deforestation countries and small island developing States. They reaffirm the need to support cross-sectoral and cross-institutional policies promoting sustainable forest management. They also highlight the recognition in the outcome document of the

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", of the vital role of the United Nations Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, in addressing forest-related issues in a holistic and integrated manner and promoting international policy coordination and cooperation to achieve sustainable forest management.

77. The Ministers call upon the international community and the United Nations system to fully support Caribbean States in their efforts to gain international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, recognizing the importance of the Caribbean Sea to present and future generations and to the heritage and the continuing well-being and sustenance of people living in the area, and the urgent need for the countries of the region to take appropriate steps for its preservation and protection, with the support of the international community.

78. The Ministers emphasize the importance of addressing energy issues, including access to affordable energy and energy efficiency, as well as sustainability of energy sources and use, as part of global efforts for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of sustainable development.

79. The Ministers recall that the Group of 77 and China were a major force in the negotiation of the law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The positions of the Group of 77 and China remarkably influenced the consecration of some crucial law of the sea concepts inextricably linked to sustainable development: the exclusive economic zone, where the coastal State enjoys sovereign rights over the natural resources and the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction ("the Area"), in which the exploitation of the resources has to benefit mankind as a whole, irrespective of the geographical location of States, whether coastal or landlocked, and taking into particular consideration the interests and needs of developing States.

80. In this regard, the Ministers recall that General Assembly resolution 2749 (XXV) and, subsequently, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea crystallized in a conventional norm the principle of the common heritage of mankind, to which the Group of 77 and China have adhered from its inception, in 1967.

81. The Ministers recognize that a major challenge to developing countries has arisen in the law of the sea: the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. The exploitation of and benefit from resources of a maritime area that is a common heritage of mankind by a few is inconsistent with the general principles of international law, including those on equity, as the Area and its resources are to benefit mankind as a whole. In this context, the Ministers stress that the status quo is not an option.

82. The Ministers emphasize that the basic principle enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in General Assembly resolution 2749 (XXV) applicable to these resources is that of the common heritage of mankind, and that a specific legal regime for the biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction needs to be developed in the form of an implementing agreement to the Convention based on that principle. Such an implementing agreement has to be negotiated as a package, and must encompass the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including genetic resources, the

sharing of benefits taking into account intellectual property rights, scientific research, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

83. The Ministers express their concern over the increased frequency and scale in recent years of natural disasters, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for countries, in particular developing countries. As a result, millions of people are killed and millions are displaced. They reiterate how disaster impacts are undermining vulnerable livelihoods, countries' economic growth and progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, these challenges have been compounded by the impact of the global economic and financial crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, the energy crisis and the challenges posed by climate change.

84. The Ministers call upon the international community, in particular developed countries and the relevant international organizations, to increase their assistance to the affected States, including by supporting efforts towards enhancing their national and regional capacities for the implementation of plans and strategies for preparedness, rapid response, recovery and development in relation to natural disasters. They stress that further efforts are needed in terms of the provision of new and additional financial resources and transfer of technology, from developed countries to developing countries, to promote the implementation of programmes aimed at disaster risk reduction, and the enhancement of their national and regional capacities for the implementation of plans and strategies for prevention, including early warning systems, preparedness, rapid response, recovery and development in relation to natural disasters.

85. The Ministers recognize the need to ensure the realization of the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and resolve to strengthen health systems and promote a multisectoral approach to address the health needs of the populations of developing countries.

86. The Ministers recognize that the global burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century and undermines the sustainable development of Member States, and, in this regard, also recognize the urgent need for greater measures at the global, regional and national levels to address communicable and non-communicable diseases.

87. The Ministers reaffirm that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly is the sole main committee of the Organization entrusted with responsibilities for administrative, financial and budgetary matters. In this regard, the Ministers request that any budgetary, financial and administrative matters including those related to the establishment of a peacekeeping operation or a special political mission be discussed solely in the framework of the Fifth Committee, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

88. The Ministers strongly support the oversight role performed by the General Assembly, as well as its relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. In this context, they renew their commitment to strengthen the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and encourage States members of the Group of 77 and China to fill all the vacancies of the Committee assigned to the regional groups where they

participate. The Ministers also urge the rest of the membership of the United Nations to actively participate in the sessions of the Committee.

89. The Ministers reaffirm that any Secretariat and management reform efforts, including on its budget process, must not intend to change the intergovernmental, multilateral and international nature of the Organization but must strengthen the ability of Member States to perform their oversight and monitoring role, and that Member States' consideration and prior approval is essential in all cases where the measures to be implemented fall under the prerogatives of the General Assembly, and in this regard they recall resolution 66/257. They also reaffirm the right of the entire membership of the United Nations to pronounce on the administration of the Organization, including on its budgetary matters, and the need for a continuous interaction and dialogue between the Secretariat and the General Assembly aimed at fostering a positive environment for negotiations, the decision-making process and the implementation of the reform measures.

90. The Ministers reaffirm the importance of the strategic framework as the principal policy directive of the Organization and that its content should fully reflect the mandates of Member States, including the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. In this context, they stress the need for States members of the Group of 77 to fully participate in the consideration of the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015.

91. The Ministers reaffirm the commitment of the Group of 77 and China to the United Nations Secretariat and management reform, with a view to making the Organization more effective, representative, transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the Member States. They highlight that, for these reforms to be successful, they must be predicated on broad and inclusive consultations with the General Assembly and must reflect and strengthen the Member State-driven nature of the Organization.

92. The Ministers stress the need to submit for consideration and prior approval of the General Assembly, through its Fifth Committee, any proposal or measure related to the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Change Management Team that fall within the purview of Member States, in line with the provisions contained in General Assembly resolutions 64/259 and 66/257.

93. The Ministers underline that the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments reflects changes in the relative economic situations of the Member States. The Ministers further reaffirm the principle of "capacity to pay" as the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations and reject any change to the elements of the current methodology for the preparation of the scale of assessments aimed at increasing the contributions of developing countries. In this regard, they emphasize that the core elements of the current methodology of the scale of assessments, such as base period, gross national income, conversion rates, low per capita income adjustment, gradient, floor, ceiling for least developed countries and debt stock adjustment must be kept intact and are not negotiable.

94. The Ministers stress that the current maximum assessment rate, or ceiling, was fixed as a political compromise and is contrary to the principle of the capacity to pay and a fundamental source of distortion in the scale of assessments. In this

context, they urge the General Assembly to undertake a review of this arrangement, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 55/5 C.

95. The Ministers affirm that the current principles and guidelines for the apportionment of the expenses of peacekeeping operations approved by the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions should constitute a basis for any discussion on the peacekeeping scale. In this regard, the Ministers stress that the peacekeeping scale must clearly reflect the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security. The Ministers also recall that the economically less developed countries have a limited capacity to contribute towards the budgets of peacekeeping operations. In this context, the Ministers emphasize that any discussion on the system of discounts applied to the peacekeeping scale should take into account the conditions of developing countries, whose current positions must not be negatively affected. The Ministers stress, in this regard, that no member of the Group of 77 and China that is not a permanent member of the Security Council should therefore be categorized above level C.

96. The Ministers reaffirm that the financial stability of the United Nations should not be jeopardized by arbitrary measures. The Ministers stress that any efforts to use financial contributions to push for the adoption of certain proposals are counterproductive and violate the obligations of the Member States to provide resources for the Organization, as enshrined in its Charter.

97. The Ministers, in this context, reject all unilateral coercive measures contrary to international law, which obstruct and sometimes impede payments of assessed contributions from members of the Group of 77 and China to the budgets of the Organization.

98. The Ministers also express concern over the closure of the official bank accounts of Member States of the Group of 77, which has impaired proper functioning of the missions and the payment of Member States' contributions to the Organization. In this regard, the Ministers stress that the private nature of the banking system does not relieve the host country of its responsibility to ensure unrestricted banking services to the permanent missions of the Member States of the Group in New York and urge the host country to fulfil its obligations accordingly.

99. The Ministers strongly reaffirm the legal obligation of all Member States to bear the financial expenses of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, and urge all Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time, in full and without conditions. They also stress that the special and genuine difficulties faced by some developing countries, which temporarily prevent them from meeting their financial obligations, should be fully taken into account and that the decisions of the General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Scale of assessments" must be responsive to such difficulties.

100. The Ministers stress that the level of resources to be approved by the General Assembly must be commensurate with all mandated programmes and activities in order to ensure their full and effective implementation. They also reaffirm the priorities of the Organization as approved by the General Assembly and the need for the Secretary-General to reflect these priorities when presenting proposed programme budgets.

101. The Ministers reiterate that there is a need to strike a balance in reflecting the agreed priorities of the Organization in the allocation of resources to the United

Nations regular budget, which is persistently to the detriment of development activities. In this regard, the Ministers also stress that the Secretariat must strictly implement General Assembly mandates without exceptions or delays.

102. In this context, the Ministers stress that the strengthening of the United Nations and its role in international cooperation for development is essential to respond to current and future challenges and opportunities emanating from the process of globalization. They recognize that the United Nations needs to improve its capabilities and capacities to fully implement its mandates and to ensure the effective delivery of its programmes in the social and economic development field. In this regard, they urge the Secretary-General to further strengthen the development pillar of the whole organization, including its Development Account.

103. The Ministers stress the importance of ensuring that the Secretariat meets the highest standards of accountability, transparency, integrity and ethical conduct. The Ministers, therefore, urge the Secretary-General, as a matter of priority, to fully implement General Assembly resolutions 64/259 and 66/257.

104. The Ministers express concern at the inadequate share of the developing countries in the United Nations system of procurement. They emphasize that United Nations procurement should be on as wide a geographical basis as possible with preferential treatment for the developing countries. They further underline that the United Nations supplier roster should be representative of the membership of the Organization and underscore the need to implement concrete measures to ensure greater market access by businesses from developing countries in United Nations procurement.

105. The Ministers stress the need to increase the representation of developing countries, in particular at the senior levels, and to improve geographic distribution in the Secretariat and to increase transparency in the recruitment process.

106. The Ministers recall the decision of the Heads of State and Government at the Second South Summit held in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005, to work to ensure that programmes and policies designed in the context of globalization fully respect the principles and purposes of the Charter and international law, particularly as they relate to equality among States, respect for the independence of States, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and to stress that those principles and purposes inspire our full commitment to multilateralism and the search for a more just and equitable international economic system that offers opportunities to raise the standard of living of its peoples.

107. The Ministers recall the decision of the Heads of State and Government at the Second South Summit, to work towards the realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, which adversely affects their social and economic development, and to call on the international community to take all necessary measures to bring an end to the continuation of foreign occupation, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

108. The Ministers reiterate their call for the immediate and full withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the remaining Lebanese occupied land. They reaffirm their support for a Middle East peace process aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the

region, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and 1850 (2008) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, they also reaffirm their support for the Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by the Arab Summit Conference in March 2002.

109. The Ministers stress the need for the early realization by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and to the independence of the State of Palestine to allow for their stability, prosperity and development towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, to which all peoples are entitled. The Ministers express support for the efforts of the Palestinian people to achieve independence and welcome in this regard the submission of Palestine's application on 23 September 2011 for full membership in the United Nations.

110. The Ministers condemn the ongoing Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the illegal actions by the occupying Power that continue to cause civilian casualties, socioeconomic and humanitarian hardship and destruction to Palestinian properties, infrastructure and agricultural lands and to undermine the contiguity, unity and integrity of the Territory.

111. The Ministers express deep concern about the further decline of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people, particularly in the besieged Gaza Strip, as a result of illegal Israeli practices, including construction of settlements and the Wall and the imposition of a blockade and hundreds of checkpoints. They call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately cease all illegal measures impairing the Palestinian economy and development, in particular the inhumane and illegal blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including commercial trade, throughout, into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to make reparation for all damages caused to Palestinian properties, institutions and infrastructure. They reiterate their call upon the international community to continue providing much-needed development and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, during this critical period particularly for reconstruction and economic recovery in the Gaza Strip.

112. The Ministers reaffirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land, water and energy resources; and demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion, and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

113. The Ministers reaffirm the need for the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resume negotiations in accordance with the principles and the objectives of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in order to find, as soon as possible, a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands, which seriously damages the economic capacities of Argentina and the need for both parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply the introduction of unilateral modifications in the situation while the Islands are going through the process recommended by the General Assembly.

114. The Ministers reaffirm the need to find a peaceful solution to the sovereignty issues facing developing countries, including among others the dispute over Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, which was unlawfully excised from the

territory of Mauritius in violation of international law and United Nations General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965. Failure to resolve these decolonization and sovereignty issues would seriously damage and undermine the development and economic capacities and prospects of developing countries.

115. The Ministers reiterate their position that South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation and reaffirmed that South-South cooperation is a collective endeavour of developing countries based on the principle of solidarity and premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations, and as such South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion as reaffirmed in the Nairobi outcome document. In this context, the Ministers stress that South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South. As such, South-South cooperation, which is critical for developing countries, requires long-term vision and a global institutional arrangement as envisioned at the Second South Summit.

116. The Ministers reaffirm the importance of strengthening South-South cooperation, especially in the current international economic environment and reiterate their support for South-South cooperation as a strategy to sustain the development efforts of developing countries and as a means of enhancing their participation in the global economy. They reiterate the framework and the principles of South-South cooperation as endorsed at their thirty-fourth annual meeting, held in New York on 28 September 2010 and subsequently reiterated at the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth annual ministerial meetings.

117. The Ministers stress that the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation is the central multilateral policymaking body in the United Nations system to review and assess global and system-wide progress on and support for South-South development cooperation, including triangular cooperation, and to provide overall guidance on future directions. The Ministers urge all partners interested in supporting South-South cooperation to be guided by the principles and objectives for such cooperation established in such internationally agreed documents as the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, and the Nairobi outcome document on South-South cooperation, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/222 of 21 December 2009, as well as other relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Ministers, therefore, reiterate the Group's position that any policy debate outside the United Nations system should be guided by the agreed frameworks above and the Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation.

118. The Ministers welcomed decision 17/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, particularly paragraph number 8 on renaming the former Special Unit by the current denomination of United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and in that regard, emphasize that the support of the United Nations system to South-South cooperation could be scaled up through strengthening the United Nations Office on South-South Cooperation by providing human, financial and technical resources that will help the Office to keep pursuing its advisory role, providing substantive and strategic advice while giving capacity-building support through the United Nations Development Programme as well as other funds and

programmes, enabling the Office to support the mainstreaming of South-South cooperation across the United Nations development system.

119. The Ministers recognize the need to mobilize adequate resources for enhancing South-South cooperation and, in this context, invite all countries in a position to do so to contribute in support of such cooperation through, inter alia, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation.

120. The Ministers welcome the progress made in the operationalization of the Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South and invite the Member States of the Group of 77 to offer hosting technical preparatory meetings prior to the First General Conference of the Consortium. They also welcome the convening by the Chair of the Group of 77 of a High-level Meeting on South-South Cooperation in Science and Technology on the occasion of the World Forum on Science, held in Budapest from 16 to 19 November 2011.

121. The Ministers recall paragraph 120 of the Declaration adopted at its annual session on September 2011 regarding the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture and the unanimous decision of the General Conference of UNESCO at its thirty-sixth session in November 2011, and requests the Director General of UNESCO to earnestly relaunch the activities of the Fund, bearing in mind the full respect for General Conference resolution 18C/87 establishing the Fund in 1974 with a large "intellectual and operational autonomy" and resolution 35C/48, adopted in 2009, emphasizing the "intellectual and operational autonomy" of the Fund.

122. The Ministers invite the Member States of the Group of 77 to come forward with an offer of venue for hosting the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on South-South Cooperation in 2013. They also invite Member States to host sectoral meetings in various fields of cooperation, including South-South forums for parliamentarians, mayors, youth, media and civil society and other thematic meetings, as envisaged in the Doha Plan of Action, adopted at the Second South Summit.

123. The Ministers note that, in view of the mounting and intractable challenges that developing countries face, more frequent high-level meetings of the Group on thematic or sectoral issues, and with action-oriented outcomes, might be required. To this end, the Ministers invite members of the Group of 77 to make offers to host regularly high-level meetings of the Group on key issues of interest to the South.

124. The Ministers recall the Development Platform for the South and invite member countries of the Group of 77 to host brainstorming sessions of the high-level panel of eminent personalities of the South with a view to updating regularly the Platform, taking into account the evolving realities and challenges that developing countries face.

125. The Ministers note the preparations for the Third South Summit and invite the Chair of the Group of 77 to continue his consultations with Member States for the hosting of the Summit to be held at a convenient date.

126. The Ministers approve the report of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and endorse its recommendations. The Ministers commend the Chair of the Trust Fund for his continued commitment and express their satisfaction with the results achieved

by the Fund. In the light of the substantial decrease in the interest earnings of the Fund caused by the current world financial situation, as reported by the Chair of the Fund, the Ministers appeal to every Member State to make a significant contribution to the Fund on the occasion of the United Nations Joint Pledging Conference for Development Activities, to be held in New York on 14 November 2012.

127. The Ministers approve the Financial Statement of the Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries account of the Group of 77, as presented by the Chair of the Group of 77 and urge those Member States that have not yet done so to make special efforts to pay their outstanding contributions.

128. The Ministers express their deep appreciation to Algeria for its able leadership and for its excellent work and tireless efforts as the Chair country of the Group of 77 for 2012. As 2012 proved to be a challenging year for all developing countries, the commitment shown by Algeria as Chair country in pursuing the goals and objectives of the Group of 77 was a source of profound gratitude. The Ministers also commend the efficient work and continued valuable support provided by the secretariat of the Group of 77 in New York to the Chair country and to the Member States and congratulate the Executive Secretary of the Group of 77 on the achievement award presented to him during the opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting in recognition of his outstanding performance, his continued commitment and dedication to the goals and objectives of the Group of 77.

129. The Ministers warmly welcome the election by acclamation of Fiji to the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 for 2013.